

VISITABERDEENSHIRE'S CALEDONIAN SLEEPER AUTUMN CAMPAIGN

This campaign, in partnership with Caledonian Sleeper, sat as part of our autumn “Above and beyond” campaign, aimed to reach people living in the London area with a highly targeted campaign promoting Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire’s autumn offering.

We are committed to evaluating our campaigns to make sure we find out whether they achieved what they set out to do. The findings from these evaluations then become invaluable insights for future campaign planning.

HEADLINES

625 survey respondents

90% stated they recalled the campaign

£500,000

The estimated spend in the region attributable to this campaign

- The campaign **drove action**, with respondents signing up to Caledonian Sleeper’s newsletter, visiting Caledonian Sleeper’s website and also talking to friends and family about visiting the destination
- Of those who had visited as a result of the campaign, the top mode of travel was **train**

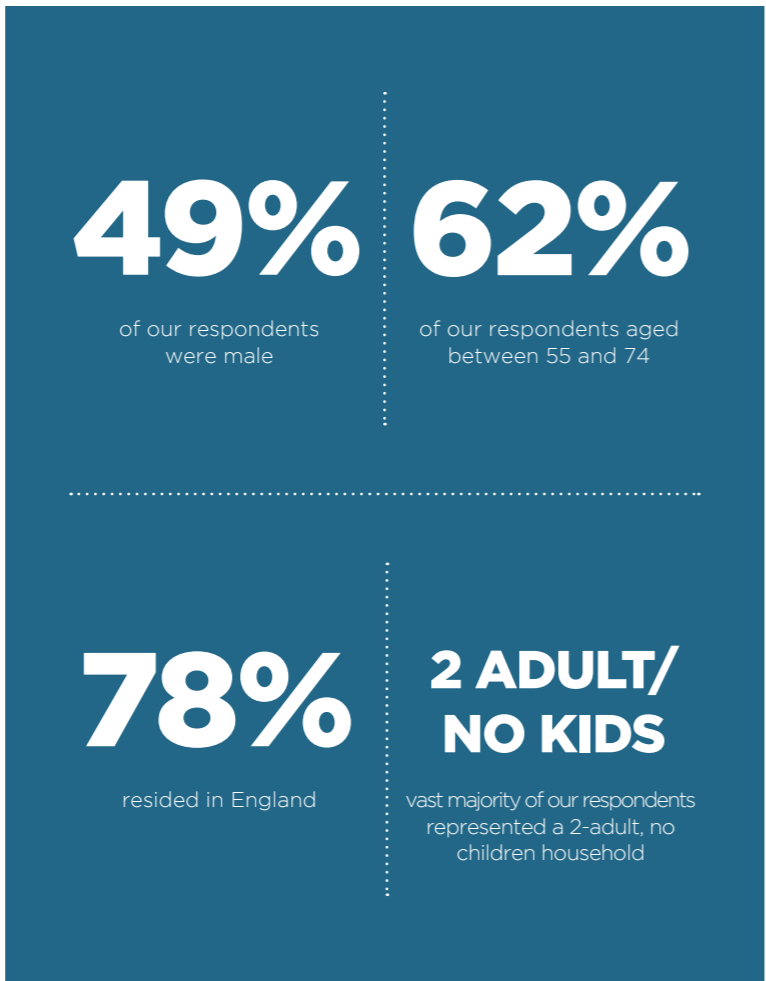
2,535,391
IMPRESSIONS

33,887
ENGAGEMENTS

32,176
LINK CLICKS

19,000+
ENTRIES
for the competition

15,000+
PAGE VIEWS
of campaign landing page



WHO DID WE SPEAK TO?

Respondents were split very equally between female **(48%)** and male **(49%)**, in contrast to what we typically see in our survey responses (more dominated by females).

We tend to have a mature audience responding to our consumer surveys. In the case of our autumn partnership campaign with Caledonian Sleeper, the majority of survey respondents fell between 55 and 74 age range **(62%)**, with a further **11%** aged 75+.

Given the target audience for this campaign, it is no surprise that the vast majority of visitors came from England **(78%)**, and **11%** from Scotland and **10%** selecting "Other".

A large chunk of our respondents represented a 2-adult, no children household. There was a number of respondents who are one-adult, no children households.

WHAT DID THEY TELL US?

WAS OUR CAMPAIGN MEMORABLE?

Absolutely. The vast majority of respondents (90%) said they either definitely or think they recall seeing it. They were then shown imagery to double-check they were recalling this specific campaign. 91% stated this is what they recalled seeing.

This is a key finding in itself, showing the campaign resonated with our audience, and is promising in terms of potential actions respondents went on to take having been exposed to the campaign.

In past surveys, Facebook often emerges as the top place for where respondents recalling having seen the campaign. This survey was quite different, the top answer, by quite a margin, was Caledonian Sleeper eNewsletter. In second and third place were Caledonian Sleeper's website (sleeper.scot) and VisitAberdeenshire's eNewsletter.

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Top place for seeing the campaign was Caledonian Sleeper eNewsletter

HOW DID OUR CAMPAIGN MAKE PEOPLE THINK AND FEEL?

We gave the respondents a set of statements to explore what the campaign had made them think and feel with regards to the destination. They all received agreement levels of at least 50% (a positive outcome in its own right demonstrating the influence of the campaign and the shifts taking place in attitude and perception), but the top 3 (based on Strongly agree/agree) were:

Aberdeen and/or Aberdeenshire has a **rich history and diverse culture** (85% in agreement)

Caledonian Sleeper is a good way of travelling to and from Aberdeen (83% in agreement)

Aberdeen and/or Aberdeenshire has a **range of quality experiences** to enjoy (82% in agreement)

WHAT DID PEOPLE GO ON TO DO HAVING SEEN THE VISITABERDEENSHIRE | CALEDONIAN SLEEPER CAMPAIGN?

As well as what the campaign made respondents think and feel, we also, crucially, want to know what it made them do, ie. What action did they go on to take?

First we look at what they might have done **very soon after seeing the campaign**. The top four actions were:



1) Enter the campaign prize draw



2) Visit Caledonian Sleeper's website



3) Sign up to Caledonian Sleeper's eNewsletter



4) Talk to friends and family about a visit to Aberdeen and/or Aberdeenshire in the future

It is very positive to see respondents embark on their journey with, or engage further with, Caledonian Sleeper, evidenced through visiting their website and eNewsletter sign up.

Of the 13 statements presented, it is also reassuring to see "Talking to friends and family" in at number 4, emphasising that the campaign **sparked conversations** and **achieved advocacy**.

We are always interested to find out if the campaign had inspired people to take a future holiday or short break in the region, so it was positive to find out that some respondents had already visited, or had booked elements of their trip as a result of the campaign, with us able to calculate that £500,000 visitor spend can be attributed to this specific campaign.

In terms of how the campaign had influenced their break, the top three statements were:

"I decided to travel by rail over another transport method"

"I visited/will visit Aberdeen and/or Aberdeenshire at a different time of the year than I normally would"

"I chose Caledonian Sleeper over another rail provider"

We see this influence evidenced through responses to the "mode of travel" used to reach the destination.

TOP 3 mode of travel



Train (by a significant margin)



Car



Plane

This ranking clearly shows the influence of the campaign as separate research demonstrates the most dominant mode of travel is often by car.

Of those who had visited, 86% gave a satisfaction rate of 8, 9 or 10 (on a scale where 1 was Extremely dissatisfied and 10 was Extremely satisfied).



86% gave a satisfaction rate of 8, 9 or 10

OUR RESPONDENTS TOOK THE TIME TO SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS WITH US

"I intend to treat my daughter, travel on the overnight train to Aberdeen and spend a couple of days there before flying back to the south east."

"Going to Aberdeen was such a big surprise – it has everything! Traditional old parts, the new, excellent shopping facilities – and a beach to die for! Fantastic place. Footdee old village and Maritime Museum were among my favourites."

"I really enjoyed my first trip to Aberdeen with easy access, and good walking along the beach, to and around the University precinct and a really good city centre. I would definitely recommend it strongly to any of my friends and relations (and may seek to go with them)."

"Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, and the culture and attitude towards culture that I have experienced there make it a great destination. Unpretentious but vibrant, with a real appreciation of heritage and culture. Beacon of the Far North."

"The combination of the features of the city, the welcoming of its people and the ease of getting about together with the overnight accommodation provided by the Caledonian Sleeper made my travel to (and stay in) Aberdeen one of the highlights of my stay in the UK. I would be happy to do it all again!"

"Thank you for raising my interest in a city I only new of for off shore oil and assumed was just cold and bleak."

INTERESTS AND PASSIONS

Our respondents told us that the top interests/passions that have attracted/would attract them to visit the region are:



WHAT WOULD ENCOURAGE FUTURE VISITS?



We saw a strong pattern emerging with the responses to this question and, as with all our previous consumer surveys, the top things that would help get people here are:

- 1) A good deal, special offer, promotion on **travel** (air fares, train tickets, etc)
- 2) A good deal, special offer, promotion on **accommodation**
- 3) Knowing more about things to do and places to see

WHY ARE PEOPLE NOT CONSIDERING THE DESTINATION FOR VISITS THIS COMING YEAR?

When we asked about their intentions to visit the region, a small number of respondents stated they had no plans to visit in the next year.

When we probed on this, the top responses were:

- The rise in cost of living is affecting my travel/holiday plans in general**
- Travel to Aberdeen and/or Aberdeenshire is too expensive**
- Personal financial reasons**

The first and third are factors we have little control over but the second highlights, again, the importance of deals and offers and highlighting the range of travel options available and ensuring our messaging helps dispel (mis)perceptions around travel cost, and time.

HOW IS OUR REGION PERCEIVED BY VISITORS?

This is about trying to understand perceptions rather than experiences. What are the associations people have with the region? Knowing this can help us, and businesses, unlock how to communicate with them. All the words/phrases have value in terms of understanding what works but also where the challenges are.

The top three words/phrases selected as **BEST** describing the region were: **“Rich in culture and heritage”, “Beautiful” and “Welcoming”**

The top three words/phrases selected as **LEAST** describing the region were **Easy to get to** (consider in light of the fact the vast majority of our respondents were from England), **Upmarket** and **For all seasons**.

WELCOMING
RICH IN
CULTURE &
HERITAGE
BEAUTIFUL

HOW ARE WE USING THESE RESULTS?

Within VisitAberdeenshire, we will use these findings to help further inform our future campaigns, both in terms of our messaging and the visual content we select to make sure it fits with what really engages visitors.

From an individual business viewpoint, do review the findings and consider how well your own images and narrative align to these findings. Some specific findings we will be picking up on:

- **Revisiting our content to make sure it ticks those interests/passions drivers:**
 - History and heritage
 - Exploring towns and cities
 - Experiencing the natural environment
 - Food and drink
- **Encouraging businesses to highlight and promote any deals and offers relating to travel**
- **Turning the volume up on those “best describes” engaging words/phrases:**
 - Rich in culture and heritage
 - Beautiful
 - Welcoming (is there an opportunity to have authentic stories from staff/locals)
- **Reviewing our content, and messaging, to make sure it works hard to correct any**

mis(perceptions) we see emerging from those “least describes” words:

Easy to get to
Upmarket
For all seasons

WHY DID WE CARRY OUT THE SURVEY?

The campaign focused on:

- Increasing the likelihood of people living in the London area to book an autumn break in our region
- Strengthening the positive sentiment and engagement on social media

Carrying out a post campaign survey allows us to explore these specific areas to find out what the campaign made people **think, feel** and **do**, both immediately on seeing the campaign but also in the longer-term.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

The survey was distributed to **19,855** potential respondents (all those who had entered the prize draw). Responses were received from **625** individuals, leading to a survey response rate of **3.1%** (falling within the typical range of 3-5% for surveys of this type). The survey was live in January 2024.

INSIGHTS & EVALUATION AT VISITABERDEENSHIRE

VisitAberdeenshire has an ongoing commitment to learning and understanding as much as we can about our current and future visitors. This deeper understanding helps inform our activity and that of businesses within the region.

If you would like to discuss this Factsheet, the fuller slide deck for this study, or any aspects of the work we do and how it can help support your business, please contact us on insights@visitabdn.com

Have you had a look at our latest insights focusing on motivations, behaviours and preferences? It summarises work commissioned by us in Autumn of 2023 and the results are based on 1600 respondents. You can find the factsheet and slide deck within the “Consumer Insights” section of our industry website.